

Press release

Museum Folkwang

New acquisition of the Department of Photography: Museum Folkwang presents *Daniela Comani. Planet Earth: 21st Century* in a new exhibition

Essen, 19 January 2023 – From 20 January to 11 June 2023, Museum Folkwang is showing its new acquisition *Planet Earth: 21st Century* by the Italian photographer Daniela Comani (*1965). In the exhibition of the same name, the extensive work is presented in dialogue with works from the museum holdings of the Department of Photography. In parallel, new works by students in Photography Studies and Practice of the Folkwang University of the Arts can be seen under the title *Stopover 2023*.

The work complex *Planet Earth: 21st Century* (2015–2019) by Daniela Comani, acquired in 2022, consists of an archive of black-and-white postcards. It shows important monuments such as the Arc de Triomphe in Paris or the Colosseum in Rome. However, less familiar but equally fascinating cities, buildings and structures are also depicted. As a kind of encyclopaedia, 360 places are shown that Comani has travelled to virtually via her computer. The artist navigates through the map services Apple Maps Flyover and Google Earth, which depict the world in 3D renderings. By selecting certain perspectives and sections, Comani reproduces the screenshots as black-and-white postcards as well as in the form of an artist's book. Through the transformation, the Berlin-based artist refers to analogue photography as well as the distribution method of images from all over the world that was popular especially in the 20th century.

Comani's interest in the places shown is not of a touristic nature. For the photographer, her inventory is a contemporary historical document of the early 21st century. Incessantly, man shapes and reshapes the earth, cities grow and decay, and monuments are toppled or outlive generations. Comani's archive represents a moment within this development – in its depicted objects as well as in the state of technology itself. The virtual journeys Comani undertook from 2015 to 2019 were limited only by which places were already made available in 3D by digital map services.

The virtual image opens up further aspects of Comani's working method. On closer inspection, calculation errors in the renderings – so-called glitches – catch the eye, in which the striking architectural structures lose their fixed form and photographic image information changes into new virtual realities. Entire city districts blur and become shadowy volumes and textures. The absence of humans, who have been algorithmically removed from the city views, is also striking.

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Accompanying Comani's deserted urban views, the exhibition presents works by artists from the museum holdings of the Department of Photography. From the 19th century, for example, Edouard Baldus's photographs represent various city views in France as a stage. A directly human experience is reflected in the conceptual and sociological works from the 20th and 21st centuries by Ella Bergmann-Michel, Mario de Biasi, Wendelin Bottländer, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Jürgen Heinemann, Arne Schmitt/Andrej Steinbach and Randa Shaath. These photographers understand places as social space that is shaped and influenced by people in equal measure.

At the same time, students of the master's programme Photography Studies and Practice of the Folkwang University of the Arts will present their current projects in the exhibition *Stopover 2023. M.A. Photography Studies* (20 January – 11 June 2023), thus providing insights into the development processes of their works. The students of the parallel master's programme Photography Studies and Research will hold a workshop on 27 January 2023.

Daniela Comani's work complex *Planet Earth: 21st Century* was acquired in 2022 with funding from Stiftung Presse-Haus NRZ.

Information

DANIELA COMANI

Planet Earth: 21st Century

20 January – 11 June 2023

Department of Photography in the Basement

Admission is free of charge



Daniela Comani

Planet Earth: 21st Century, 2015–2019

Rome, Italy. Porta San Paolo / San Paolo Gate, former Porta Ostiensis (270–275 AC), Piramide Cestia / Pyramid of Cestius (18–12 BC) and Cimitero acattolico / Protestant Cemetery (1716)

Postcard: 14.8 x 10.5 cm

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